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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 21, 2009

NEWS RELEASE

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**OHS Urging Motorists to Slow Down and Use Caution After 8th
Fatal Crash Since Start of the New Year**
‘We’re averaging a fatal crash every three to four days’

Dover – Delaware Office of Highway Safety officials are urging motorists to slow down and use additional caution after a Wednesday afternoon crash became the eighth fatal crash of the New Year in Delaware. The 77 year old Laurel man who was killed in the latest fatal crash brings the total number of people killed since January 1st in these traffic crashes to nine (9), as the second crash to occur in 2009 resulted in a double fatality.

“We are averaging a fatal crash every three to four days and it has to stop,” said Andrea Summers, Community Relations Officer for the Office of Highway Safety. “If we keep going at this rate, we’ll have another fatal crash this weekend, and another family will be devastated. Every person behind the wheel has the ability and opportunity to prevent a fatal crash by slowing down and paying extra attention when they are on the road.”

Of the eight fatal crashes so far according to police reports, three have been speed related, two have been alcohol-related, 1 person failed to stop at a red light, one failed to remain stopped at a stop sign, and one was a pedestrian who reportedly crossed in front of a moving vehicle.

Additionally, five of the crashes occurred at night (between midnight and 2 a.m.), five occurred in New Castle County, two in Sussex, and two occurred in Kent. Of the eight victims who were either drivers or passengers (not the pedestrian), five were not wearing seat belts and as a result at least two were ejected from their vehicles.

At this time last year, five people had been killed in vehicle crashes. OHS asks all drivers to remember the basics of driving safety:

- Buckle up every trip, every time. Delaware state law requires the driver and all passengers including those in the back seat to buckle up. Wearing a seat belt improves your chances of surviving a collision by nearly 50%.
- Slow down. Observe the posted speed limits and adjust your speeds down when entering curves, or when snow, rain, or icy conditions are predicted.
- Never drink and drive. Alcohol impairs your coordination, your reaction time, and your judgment making you believe you can drive safely when in fact it's dangerous for you to do so. Always use a designated driver, cab, or bus service to get you safely home.
- Pay attention when approaching a signaled intersection for traffic lights which are changing.
- Take additional time to look both ways at stop signs to make sure no one else is coming before you proceed.
- When crossing the roadways on foot, only use marked crosswalks or signaled or signed intersections as crossing points. If you are walking at night, wear reflective clothing or carry a flashlight as required by state law.
- When driving in rain, snow, fog or other weather conditions that may require you to use your windshield wipers, remember to turn on your headlights as required by state law so others can see you.

For more information on the Office of Highway Safety's ongoing safety programs, please visit our website at www.ohs.delaware.gov.

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